United Nations A/49/PV.32

General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

32nd Meeting
Friday, 14 October 1994, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Programme of work

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I should like to consult delegations on the proposed format regarding the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, to be held on Thursday, 20 October 1994, in the morning.

After the opening of the meeting the Assembly would hear a statement by the Secretary-General. Next, the Assembly would hear statements by the Chairmen of the five regional groups and by the representative of the host country, as decided by the Assembly at its 3rd meeting, on 23 September 1994, regarding observances and commemorative meetings. The Assembly would also hear statements by the Chairmen of the Group of 77 and of the European Union, the President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, the Chairman of the Group of Nordic Countries and the Chairman of the Second Committee.

I understand that interested delegations will submit a draft resolution in advance of the meeting for consideration on that date.

May I take it that the Assembly approves of this format?

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I should like to request delegations to cooperate by making an effort to keep their statements under the 15-minute limit, as decided by the Assembly.

Statement by the President

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I should like to seek the cooperation of delegations on the matter of punctuality. I remind delegations that punctuality is of the utmost importance in ensuring the effective and orderly organization of the work of the Assembly and in achieving economies for the United Nations.

I strongly endorse the practical suggestions made at previous sessions that each delegation designate someone to be present at the scheduled time. I genuinely hope that all delegations will cooperate.

Agenda item 33 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The President *(interpretation from French)*: Before calling on the first speaker I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Nigeria has expressed a desire to participate in the debate on this item.

94-86660 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum. When the result of a recorded and/or roll-call vote is followed by an asterisk, see annex to the record.

Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed on Thursday, 13 October, at noon, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of this delegation in the list of speakers?

I see none. Nigeria is therefore included in the list.

Mr. Dimitrov (Bulgaria): The Bulgarian delegation joins all the others that have expressed appreciation of the untiring efforts of Ambassador Samuel Insanally, who so skilfully chaired the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/26. I should like also to thank the Vice-Chairmen of the Group, Ambassador Breitenstein and Ambassador Chew, for their remarkable work.

Bulgaria shares the opinion that the ongoing discussion on reform of the Security Council in the framework of the Open-ended Group is highly constructive and substantive. We are ready to make an active contribution to this important exercise, which is focused on the very future of the Organization. It is our strong belief that the new spirit of cooperation prevailing in the international community will make it possible to reach consensus solutions, enabling the Security Council to meet the challenges of the new times in the most effective and efficient way.

An enlargement of the Security Council should aim to enhance its capacity in the sphere of the maintenance of international peace and security. We support the search for an appropriate balance between the need to increase the size of the Council, owing to the growth in the number of States Members of the United Nations over the years, and the need for effectiveness and efficiency in its work.

We are of the opinion that this balance could be achieved if the Council were enlarged to a number in the low twenties. In this process, it will be necessary to ensure that the increase in the number of non-permanent members preserves the ratio, on the one hand, between permanent and non-permanent members and, on the other hand, between the regional groups.

In practical terms, this would mean ensuring that States that carry considerable weight in international political and economic life - for example, Germany and Japan - as well as other countries that are influential in regional or global terms, could assume the responsibility of permanent status in the Council. An additional non-permanent seat should be allocated to the Eastern European Group. In this connection, it is appropriate to remind representatives that this regional group has exactly doubled its membership since the latest enlargement of the Council in 1965, while the membership of the United Nations over the same period has increased from 113 to 184.

We welcome the Council's recent steps to improve its working methods - steps intended to increase transparency and to secure stronger involvement by non-member States. This momentum should be maintained through mechanisms designed to take into account, at an early stage of the decision-making process, the positions of neighbouring countries and of other interested States. The question of possible contributions by regional organizations, under appropriate arrangements, should also be taken into account.

The need for such consultations is felt most strongly when economic sanctions and similar preventive and enforcement measures are being considered. This process should also include an advance detailed evaluation of any negative effects on the economies of neighbouring countries and should define the ways and means of dealing with them.

Additionally, it has become clear that there is a pressing need for an increase in the transparency of the functioning of the Security Council sanctions committees, since their work is of special importance for a number of States that have already assumed heavier burdens in implementing decisions of the Council. It would only be fair to devise mechanisms to assist these countries in their difficult situations, starting the imperative need for a greater exchange of information, regular and/or ad hoc effective briefings on the deliberations of committee meetings, and holding open meetings or allowing the States concerned to participate as observers whenever such participation is warranted by the discussion of issues of vital importance for their economies.

Other measures to improve the transparency of the work of the Council might include briefings by the Council President or his or her representative on the most important elements of the discussions during informal consultations.

Regular consultations with troop contributors and other States concerned should be institutionalized as a component of the decision-making process on peace-keeping operations, especially when the Council is considering changes in their mandates and composition.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm my country's readiness to continue to contribute actively to the important process of adapting the Organization to the new challenges confronting it, of which the reform of the Security Council is a major element.

Mr. Erdenechuluun (Mongolia): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered earlier on this agenda item by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and endorses the points raised therein. The purpose of my statement is to highlight the issues of particular interest to my delegation and to point to the ideas we consider important to bear in mind in our future work.

We believe that the Open-ended Working Group did a commendable job over the last year, considering the sensitive and delicate nature of the issues discussed. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to Ambassador Insanally, Chairman of the Working Group, and to Ambassadors Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Chew Tai Soo of Singapore, the two Vice-Chairmen, for their skill and discretion in guiding our work.

A great number of issues were covered and even more ideas exchanged during the meetings of the Open-ended Working Group. With the invaluable support of the Secretariat, the Chairman produced several papers outlining the positions of States, points on which there was convergence of views and others on which there was disagreement. By and large, the Working Group succeeded, in our view, in accumulating a wealth of ideas on how to approach and execute this centrally important task of ensuring equitable representation on and an increase in the membership of the Security Council.

None the less, the report (A/48/47) of the Open-ended Working Group to the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly reflects neither the lively discussion that took place in the Group's meetings nor the wealth of proposals and ideas submitted by the delegations. Reporting to the General Assembly on points of both agreement and disagreement within the Working Group would have been helpful, in our view, in generating more constructive and detailed discussion at this session of the General Assembly, as well as in identifying priorities for the Working Group to address next year.

In our view, the most important achievement of the Working Group lies in its recording "a convergence of views that the membership of the Security Council should be enlarged" and that "there was also agreement that the scope and nature of such enlargement require further discussion" (A/48/47, para. 8).

Another valuable point of agreement which, to our regret, was not reflected in the report, was the adoption by the Working Group of a package-deal approach providing for the inclusive and thorough consideration of mutually interrelated issues of increase in the membership and changes in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council. A mere enlargement of the Council by a few seats without adequate improvements in its working methods and procedures will not suffice.

We understand full well that an expanded Council should, by necessity, reflect the emergence of new important actors on the international scene, such as Japan and Germany. By the same token, it should be emphasized that adequate representation of the non-aligned and other developing countries in the permanent-member category must be secured.

Mongolia continues to advocate a moderate increase in both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council. We feel that a 25-26 strong membership could make the Council a body well representative of the world community and yet small enough to act quickly and efficiently.

In our understanding, the need to ensure equitable geographical representation in the Security Council is an important driving force for this whole exercise. Here, similarly, we observe with satisfaction a growing acknowledgement that Africa, Asia and Latin America should be given larger representation in the restructured Council, including in the permanent-member category. More importantly, however, we must secure a proper and fair distribution of seats within the regional groups so that every State, regardless of its size and resources, would have a fair chance to serve its term in the Council and contribute to the common cause. The idea of introducing a mechanism of constituencies in the Security Council merits further consideration, as it would facilitate proper representation of small- and medium-size States in the Council and, above all, help provide greater transparency, accountability and representativeness in its work.

The question of decision-making in the Security Council is another issue of paramount importance. We share the position of many delegations that in the long run the veto prerogative should be abolished altogether as an undemocratic institution running contrary to the

underlying principle of sovereign equality of Member States. In this context, the option of not granting the right to veto to the new permanent members in the restructured Security Council would, in our opinion, be a logical first step towards the abolishment of this institution. We also noted with interest a number of ideas aimed at limiting the application of veto rights in the future Security Council and expect the Working Group to deliberate on them with due care and attention. Here I wish to reiterate our firm belief that the rule of obligatory abstention in the Security Council, contained in Article 27 (3) of the Charter, should be revived in unequivocal terms, and ways should be found to ensure that this rule is adhered to in the restructured Council.

My delegation supports the Working Group's recommendation that it continue its work during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. We hope that on the basis of its work in 1994 the Working Group will be able to engage in an in-depth discussion of the various proposals and ideas before it with a view to reaching a balanced consensus sooner rather than later.

Mr. Cardenas (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish):* Almost one year has elapsed since the General Assembly decided to create, through resolution 48/26, an Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the question of the possible increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

This Working Group held active and effective meetings this year, and in this context I should like to highlight the excellent job done by the President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, Mr. Insanally, as well as the Vice-Chairmen of the Group, Mr. Chew Tai Soo of Singapore and Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland.

My delegation had an opportunity to take an active part in the various deliberations of this Working Group, as well as in the various informal consultations conducted by its Chairman.

The position of the Argentine Government, as already expressed in its response to the request of the Secretary-General (A/48/264), was recently reiterated in the statement made by President Carlos Menem on Tuesday, 27 September 1994, in the Assembly. It can be summarized as follows.

First, the Republic of Argentina attaches special importance to the process of reform of the Security Council which has been started. The primary objective of this process should be the strengthening of the Security Council by achieving greater effectiveness and transparency in its functioning and making it more representative of the States Members of the United Nations.

Secondly, any expansion of the membership of the Security Council should be undertaken with care and prudence, and should at all times respect the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

Thirdly, the possible increase in the number of members of the Security Council must be effected on the basis of the criteria contained in Article 23 of the United Nations Charter, criteria which we deem to be sound.

Fourthly, the Argentine Republic advocates a limited increase in non-permanent seats - I repeat, non-permanent seats - and the elimination of the clause which now bars immediate re-election.

This, as we see it, would enable those States that are in a position - and desire - to make a contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security to have seats in the Security Council more frequently. It would also avoid causing regional imbalances that might unjustifiably alter the historical system whereby some States traditionally alternate their membership of the Council, as could be precisely the case of the Argentine Republic.

Fifthly, greater transparency and representativeness of the Security Council could be achieved by better participation of the members on issues that are of specific interest to them. This could be done in two ways; first, by means of greater procedural transparency in the work of the Council, especially in informal consultations, and, secondly by establishing mechanisms that would allow for a relationship between the Members of the United Nations and the Security Council.

In this connection, the Argentine Republic, which is at present a non-permanent member of the Security Council, has already submitted an initiative, together with New Zealand, designed to establish a procedure to ensure regular and predictable dialogue between the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries when the mandates of peace-keeping operations are being reviewed or renewed. I take this opportunity to thank Member States for the valuable support we have been receiving regarding this initiative. It encourages us to pursue it.

Many aspects of this subject that have been discussed in our Working Group do not require amending the Charter of the United Nations. Many of those aspects, which could be considered as procedural but which have to do with the transparency and representativeness of the Security Council, are within the Council's own competence.

In this context, I should like to highlight the work done by the Security Council Working Group on Procedures and Documentation. In the last two years many changes have been introduced which have benefited the membership at large. However, we believe that there is still much progress to be made.

In this connection my delegation, as a member of the Security Council for the 1994-1995 term, is taking an active part in its work and has for several months, together with other delegations, advocated the consideration of the procedural issues that have been identified by the Assembly's Open-ended Working Group.

This first stage of the Working Group's activity should enable us to draw certain conclusions that would permit this process to continue effectively and usefully. To that end, let me refer to two points: first, the purpose of our future discussion and, secondly, the way to achieve that purpose.

Regarding the purpose of our discussion, we feel that we ought to focus on those points where there is clear-cut consensus - I repeat, clear-cut consensus - on the part of the membership. In this connection, we feel it would be very helpful to use the informal working paper submitted by the Chairman of the Working Group on 20 May last. It properly identifies the points of agreement.

With respect to the course of action to be followed, my delegation supports extending the mandate of the Working Group, preferably under your chairmanship, Mr. President, and with the same Vice-Chairmen.

As far as the modalities are concerned, we believe that, to ensure transparency and effectiveness, a proper balance must be struck between plenary meetings, and consultations in smaller groups.

I should like through you, Mr. President, to assure the Assembly that it can count on my delegation's full cooperation during the new session of the Working Group.

Mr. Khani (Syrian Arab Republic) *(interpretation from Arabic):* The General Assembly has been considering the item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council" since its thirty-fourth session. Although consideration of the item receded somewhat, it was resumed at the forty-eighth session. Many speakers have attached particular importance to our debate on the item. Such attention to the item is warranted in view of the importance of the subject, and of the tasks mandated to the Security Council by the Charter with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

With the approaching fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, significant questions are bound to be asked about the achievements of this Organization and the obstacles it still faces. One of the most important of those is the question of increasing the membership of the Security Council and the need to arrive at a formula for equitable representation therein. Such questions arise from the fact that the present composition of the Council, which took shape in the wake of the Second World War, has become rather anachronistic at a time when the Organization's membership is fourfold what it was at the time of its inception.

Many regional groups and Member States have worked diligently on this matter and have focused on the Council's decision-making procedures which must be studied as an integral part of an overall plan.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country, in his statement before the General Assembly, on 3 October 1994, had this to say on the matter:

> "It seems that none of the Member States objects in principle to the idea of introducing reforms to the United Nations, including the enlargement of the Security Council's membership. However, the question that could take years before any agreement is reached on it is that which relates to the nature of the required reforms, the criteria for choosing the new members of the Security Council and, first and foremost, the right of veto: whether to expand it or abolish it altogether from the Charter". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 14th meeting, [p. 17])*

Increasing the membership of the Security Council would help strengthen democracy within the United Nations and enable the Security Council to fully discharge its main responsibilities, as this would lead to strict respect for the two principles of the sovereign co-

equality of States and of equitable geographical representation on the Council.

Any reform of the Security Council must reflect the concerns of all the States Members of the United Nations whose number now stands at 184 and two-thirds of which States were not involved in the drafting of the Charter. The Security Council is the only United Nations body whose criteria for membership were set out in the Charter. Therefore, enabling the developing countries to make an effective contribution to restructuring the United Nations and to ensuring that they have their democratic share in the Security Council would be an expression of democracy in our Organization, especially that the developing nations constitute 80 per cent of the world's population.

The countries of the Mon-aligned Movement have always emphasized the need for democratizing international relations and have worked diligently for the achievement of the Movement's goals of equitable representation and increased Security Council membership.

My delegation believes that the Security Council should be reformed and restructured in response to the major changes that have taken place on the international arena and that such reform and restructuring should include a comprehensive review of the Council's methods of work and decision-making procedures.

In conclusion, we must point out that reform is not an end in itself but a necessary means of facing up to the changes that have been enfolding in the world since the end of the cold war. To face up to the challenges inherent in such changes, there is a need for the cooperation of the entire inte- ational community if we are to look forward to a better future and ensure respect for the principles of sovereignty, democracy and transparency in decision-making.

Mr. Tejera Paris (Venezuela) *(interpretation from Spanish):* Venezuela has on four occasions had the privilege of being a member of the Security Council. That experience certainly served to reaffirm our belief that any change that might take place in the membership of the Council should aim at increased regional participation and also at improving the effectiveness of the Council.

All Member States, including many of those who joined the Organization in recent years, can appreciate - through their own experience or that of their respective regions - the complex and extremely difficult nature of the work of the Council and, in particular, the complexity of the most recent conflicts and crises that the Security Council has had to deal with. The Council has made every effort to devote the required attention to these conflicts and has tried new, delicate and complicated solutions to some of them, sometimes stretching its powers to the limit.

Almost three years after the summit meeting of the Security Council, which began this new stage in the life of our Organization, the opportunity now presents itself to strike a balance, this time around with the benefit of the views of all the Member States. The General Assembly, in agreeing to consider equitable representation in the Security Council and an increase in its membership, has expressed a desire for change.

Venezuela would like to thank Ambassador Rudolph Insanally of Guyana for the manner in which he presided over the Working Group which last year considered the "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council". Its meetings were most useful in assessing existing prospects and in beginning to identify points of agreement. We are pleased to see acknowledged the need to ensure that representation in the Council must be in line with that of an Organization whose membership has grown so significantly. This expansion, which is unreservedly supported by Venezuela, must now be defined in terms of format and scope.

Venezuela believes that any expansion of the Council should be guided by the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of equitable geographical representation, and, to this end, Venezuela supports the expansion of the number of non-permanent seats.

The Government of Venezuela believes that any increase in the number of permanent seats must take into account the Latin American and Caribbean region, whose contributions to international peace and security are praiseworthy from whatever standpoint they are considered. The President of Venezuela referred explicitly to this issue in his statement before this Assembly on 30 September last.

At the same time, Venezuela would like to reiterate that the equality of the rights and responsibilities of States requires a revision of the power of veto. We have supported that principle since we became founding Members of the Organization in 1945. Present circumstances make it clear, however, that the extraordinary veto power is no longer in keeping with its

original goals. The most recent practice of the Security Council, and in particular of its permanent members, seems to confirm this as well.

We believe that the conditions are ripe for reform in the political and institutional arena. The Security Council, on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization, can and must adapt to the new international reality.

We trust that the Working Group will, in due course, resume its work and that it will begin identifying the specific characteristics that the Security Council must possess if it is to deal with future challenges. We offer our full cooperation to this end.

The President *(interpretation from French):* Before we continue our consideration of this item, I should like once again ask for the cooperation of States in being punctual. I must confess that during the general debate there were some delays in beginning our meetings. That was inevitable because of the large number of Heads of State and other officials visiting the Secretary-General and me. But the general debate is now over, and we should try to make an extra effort to be on time. At any rate, it is my firm intention to begin our meetings at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., respectively - not a minute later.

Mr. Hayes (Ireland): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to personally renew the warm words of congratulation and welcome to you, as President of the General Assembly, that were expressed by my Minister in the general debate a few weeks ago. I should also like to express our thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Insanally, for the excellent job he did as President of the last session.

The same Minister to whom I have just referred - the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ireland - adverted to Security Council reform in his statements in the general debate at both the forty-eighth and forty-ninth sessions of the General Assembly. Last month he mentioned it as one of seven points on which he believed there should be priority action in our efforts to build a United Nations capable of meeting the challenges of the new era. Both then and last year he stressed that the Security Council should be more representative of the increased general membership, reflective of the changes in economic and political relations and more responsive to the needs of the general membership.

These are the broad ambits of our policy aimed at ensuring that there is a sense of common purpose between the Council and the overall United Nations membership, on whose behalf the Council acts and which is also bound by the Council's decisions; I am referring, of course, to Article 24 and Article 25 of the Charter. That aim has been and will continue to be the guideline for our participation in the debate on this topic and in the deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group. The yardstick by which we assess any proposals made is whether we feel they contribute to the achievement of that aim.

We do not intend in this plenary debate to engage in an examination of proposals. We do not believe that any delegation or group of delegations has, or would even claim to have, the ideal solution to this question. Accordingly, we feel we should leave substantial discussions to the Working Group, where detail may be more appropriately addressed.

My delegation, of course, fully supports the decision adopted by consensus at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly which noted the report of the Open-ended Working Group and approved the recommendation that the Group should continue its work during this session of the General Assembly. We intend to continue to contribute to that work to the best of our ability and in a fully cooperative manner. We hope that the Working Group will resume its activities shortly. We favour establishment of a schedule of meetings at regular intervals, with the flexibility to adapt their frequency to developments in the negotiations. If progress is being made, it may be useful to make use occasionally of smaller groupings to come up with suggestions on limited issues, while at the same time maintaining transparency and preserving scrupulously the authority of the Working Group.

In speaking thus of procedural matters, we are assuming that the work will now move beyond the deliberative stage to a serious negotiating stage. If it does not so move, any procedural decisions will be worthless. Negotiation necessarily means addressing proposals in increasing detail. In this respect, it is helpful that some relatively detailed ideas have been placed before us by Italy and Australia. The non-paper prepared by the Working Group Chairman during the last session is also of assistance in moving towards more focused exchanges. We hope that the resumption of the work will feature, *inter alia*, responses to these documents and counter-proposals and that thus we will get down to serious negotiations.

However, none of this will happen unless and until Governments go beyond explanation of their own preoccupations to consideration of the preoccupations of others and begin the search for accommodation between them. We believe that this subject is too important for the general well-being of the United Nations to defer that development any further.

Finally, I would like to express our appreciation of the skill and industry of the members of the Bureau of the Working Group: Ambassador Insanally, Chairman, and Ambassadors Breitenstein and Chew, Vice-Chairmen. Their efforts have been the major contributing factor in the progress achieved so far, which we should not underestimate merely because of how far we still have to go. We are also confident that the Working Group will be steered successfully into and through the next stage of our negotiations.

Mr. Sitaula (Nepal): I have the great honour and privilege to speak on the agenda item before us, which is of paramount importance to all delegations and to the United Nations as a whole. My delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to Ambassador Samuel R. Insanally of Guyana, President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, for his personal initiative on the matter during his able stewardship as Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group.

With the end of the cold war, the Security Council has become the important organ of decision-making and action on various international issues. The fundamental changes in international relations, together with the rearrangement of power relations in the post-cold-war world, have made it necessary to consider the role and composition of the Council. The new imbalance between the North and the South on various political and socio-economic issues is another of the reasons behind the argument for re-examining the composition and functioning of the Council.

My delegation has actively participated in the discussion on this matter in the Working Group and has expressed its position on several occasions. We view this exercise as an endeavour to strengthen the effectiveness of the Security Council on the basis of equitable representation so that its decisions may have broad-based support and legitimacy. The Security Council's decisions are binding on all Member States since the Council has a special responsibility by which it acts on behalf of the entire membership of the United Nations. It is of fundamental importance, therefore, to explore every possibility to ensure that decisions of the Council represent the views of the general membership.

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Nepal endorses the views expressed at the Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the non-aligned countries held in Cairo in June this year and the Movement's Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation, held on 5 October 1994, on this matter. These meetings drew attention in particular to the fact that the non-aligned and developing countries are underrepresented and that the composition of the Council does not reflect the universal character of the United Nations. This imbalance especially puts into question the legitimacy, equity and credibility of the Organization. At the same time, my delegation fully shares the view that due consideration should be given to the principle of equitable geographical representation in the restructuring and revitalization of the Council.

An overwhelming majority of the Members of this Organization are small States. A situation in which reasonable opportunity is not afforded to smaller States to contribute to the work of the Security Council, in keeping with the criteria laid down in Article 23 of the Charter, would be contrary to the principle of equitable representation. In this context, we feel that the current exercise should not be limited to the enlargement of the membership, but that it should also consider a more comprehensive package of reforms in the working methods and procedures of the Council.

We attach high value to greater transparency and openness in the Council's work so that a large number of Members of the United Nations can contribute to the decision-making process. We believe that the increase in the membership of the Security Council should reflect the reality of the present-day world and international politics. We are happy to note that, during the deliberations in the Working Group, there was a broad convergence of views on greater transparency and on strengthening the relationship between the Council and the general membership.

Nepal, as a significant troop-contributor to United Nations peace-keeping operations, feels that there is a need for a consultative mechanism of the Security Council with troop- contributing countries, especially when decisions are taken regarding the mandates of new peace-keeping operations and the revision or renewal of mission mandates.

Finally, on the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, the issuance by the Security Council of a substantive annual report and special reports for the consideration of the General Assembly, as and when necessary, would provide an invaluable opportunity for the general membership to consider the work of the Council. This practice would also help strengthen the relationship between the Council and the Assembly.

Mr. Lamptey (Ghana): This being my first time at the rostrum, let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly and on the able manner in which you have conducted its affairs so far. It is the hope of my delegation that your guidance will speed the process of reform of the United Nations and particularly of the Security Council.

Recent developments and trends in global politics have given the United Nations a central role in the unfolding international order. More important, the outbreak of conflicts in virtually all regions of the world, with the need for peace to be established and kept, has placed the Security Council in a critical position in world affairs. It is evident that the international political situation on which the Security Council was built is entirely different today.

If the Security Council is to perform efficiently and effectively the role assigned it under the Charter, the international community must seize the opportunity offered by the propitious post-cold-war atmosphere and the ongoing reforms within the United Nations to bring the Security Council into sharper focus, fine-tuning it as a preeminent focal point of United Nations action in the arena of global peace. The composition and distribution of seats and the resultant powers enjoyed by members of the Security Council today are predicated upon certain factors which at the relevant point in history were defensible and justifiable. Although these arrangements were well-founded and have served us relatively well, it is the view of my delegation that the time has come when we should boldly rethink and rearrange things in such a way as to bring the Security Council into line with current changed circumstances.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In 1945, the membership of the United Nations was 51. Then in 1963, the membership having expanded to 162, the need was felt for an increase in the number of non-permanent members of the Security Council from 6 to 10 to reflect an equitable geographical representation. Now more than ever, with an expansion in membership to 184, it has become imperative that existing arrangements be reviewed.

Furthermore, the Ghana delegation believes that permanent membership in the Security Council of the five major wartime allies, although well-founded then, has become obsolete. And if it is thought necessary to retain permanent membership of the Council, then new arrangements must be reached which will create a general sense of equality and global balance in an organ as vital as the Security Council.

The question that immediately comes to mind is whether or not the veto power in the possession of the five permanent members is still necessary in the present era. This is certainly a matter that needs to be discussed thoroughly if the reform is to promote equity. Ghana subscribes fully to the position collectively articulated by the African Group on this question. At the same time, we are aware of the varied positions assumed by other groups and countries. We shall join in the creative effort to find meaningful compromises to ensure a better system.

What is important to emphasize here is that, despite our call for the increase in the number of Security Council members to 25, the issue is not a quantitative one - it is a qualitative one. It has to do with the exercise of power. It is the perception of most, including Ghana, that the power inherent in the right of veto should no longer be exercised by a privileged few and that its exercise should be democratized in such a way as to reflect balance, equity and the reality of the present international order as symbolized in the membership of this Organization. There could be many ways to achieve this objective and we should all be creative in this regard.

We need a new Security Council that will reflect the will of every nation on earth. We need a Security Council whose work is transparently reflective of all our common aspirations. We need a Security Council shorn of every vestige of big-Power politics, self-righteousness and the arrogance of size or wealth. Above all, we need a Security Council that will not usurp the function of bona fide international legal institutions and their regimes of the rule of law, a Council that cannot assume the role of a global supreme court without the benefit of a balanced mechanism through which accused nations can defend themselves, a Council without the attributes of prosecutors, judges and executioners of judgments at times flawed by bias, prejudice and preconceptions. It is

time to construct a new Security Council if we are to move away from the failures of the past and remove the blatant weaknesses of the present.

In this regard, my delegation hopes that the broad consensus that has been achieved so far by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council will guide the Group to fashion a formula that will make the Council credible. We hope this can be achieved well before the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

If our perception of the new relevance of the United Nations in a rapidly changing global situation remains anchored in the cardinal principles of justice, equity and fairness, the new Security Council that will emerge from these momentous reform efforts will become the true sentinel at the door of total human freedom, development and peace, guarding us all against the tyranny of arms and wealth and the subversive agency of unacceptable rogue conduct on the part of any nation, big or small, rich or poor.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian):* I wish to join other speakers in conveying high praise to the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, Ambassador Samuel Insanally, President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, and to the Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Chew of Singapore.

The Russian Federation believes that our consideration of this item should be seen in the general context of adapting the United Nations to the political, economic, social and other realities of today's world. As the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Boris N. Yeltsin, stressed in his address to the Assembly at this session,

> "it will be impossible to avoid changes in the Security Council, which should remain sufficiently compact and an effective functioning body. This is especially important because, according to the Charter, the Security Council bears primary responsibility for supporting and maintaining international peace and security." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 5th meeting, pp. 4-5)*

For the first time in many decades, the Security Council has in recent years been active and energetic in carrying out that difficult mission. To its credit are a number of successful peace-keeping operations and very important decisions aimed at the prevention and settlement of conflicts and at strengthening security and stability in various parts of the world. A most cooperative relationship has developed among the members of the Security Council, which would have been unthinkable during the cold war, when the Security Council was frequently used not to search seriously search for solutions to pressing problems but to air ideological attitudes.

That is why it is important to us that consideration of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council be carried out in a pragmatic, constructive manner and not turned into a cause of political friction. The large number of conflicts in the world and the active involvement of the United Nations in settling them means that our approach to this matter must be thoughtful and cautious. We cannot permit the paralysis of a machinery that has been working in a well-adjusted and on the whole successful way.

In the opinion of the Russian Federation, an absolute, mandatory condition for resolving the question of increasing the Council's membership is that the effectiveness of the Security Council be maintained and strengthened, especially in the present situation, when the world has barely recovered from the threat of global nuclear confrontation and is facing new challenges to international peace and security.

For that reason, Russia supports the proposal for a limited expansion of the membership of the Security Council, up to a limit of 20 seats. This would make it possible to maintain the Council's ability to react effectively and promptly to sudden changes in international affairs.

In doing this, it is very important to observe the criteria laid down in the Charter for membership of the Security Council, to the effect that due regard should be specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution. In our view, the present status of the permanent members of the Security Council should be maintained.

We realize the need for the Security Council, in taking decisions, to rely broadly on the views of all Members of the United Nations, and consider that, to that end, all the potential inherent in the Charter should be put to better use. Last year, the Security Council itself took a number of practical steps along these lines. Decisions were taken within existing procedures enabling other Members of the United Nations to receive fuller, prompter information about the Council's activities and to convey their views to members of the Council. We believe that those useful efforts should be continued.

Further improvement of the functioning of the Security Council should, in our view, be approached very carefully and without undue haste. It is essential that consensus measures be devised to preserve the Council's role as the central United Nations body bearing primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Russian delegation has been actively involved in the work of the Open-ended Working Group considering all aspects of the increase in the membership of the Security Council. In our view, the report of that Working Group, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, presents a full and objective picture of the current state of the Group's consideration of the item. We are prepared to continue our active participation in the work of the Group, and are open to constructive cooperation with all Members of the United Nations on this important matter.

Mr. Butler (Australia): The report of the Open-ended Working Group describes important first steps towards strengthening the Security Council. There has been progress in areas under the second cluster of issues - those dealing with improvements in the working methods of the Council. But much more is needed.

The President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, Ambassador Insanally, and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassadors Chew Tai Soo of Singapore and Willy Breitenstein of Finland, did outstanding work in guiding the Open-ended Working Group. But the report of the Working Group reflects hesitancy by the membership in reflecting the substance of the debate in that Group and the key areas on which convergence of views emerged. For this and for other reasons we are convinced that the discussion now needs to focus on concrete proposals if it is to serve the agreed objective of bringing about change. It will be through discussion and negotiation of concrete proposals that an emerging understanding of what is effective, realistic and equitable will emerge.

In his statement to the Assembly on 3 October, the Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Gareth Evans, put some illustrative proposals on the table. Those proposals rest on the following basic premises:

First, there is agreement that the Council must be expanded. This agreement is recorded in the report of the Open-ended Working Group.

Secondly, an expanded Security Council must be representative in order to maintain its perceived legitimacy and thus its future viability. For example, present geographical representation on the Council is unbalanced. The membership must be expanded to ensure that the Council better represents the universal membership than it does today.

Thirdly, it will be important that all apply rigorously the criteria and qualifications for Security Council membership elaborated in Article 23 of the Charter. In our view, seeking to elaborate criteria additional to those contained in Article 23 is likely to be an unproductive distraction from the main business of the Working Group and we would discourage travel down that path.

Fourthly, an expanded Council must be effective and capable of responding quickly to the range of difficult situations with which the international community is being and can expect to be confronted - particularly deadly conflicts and massive human rights violations occurring within States. Thus, the new Council must be representative of the broad range of interests, perspectives and capabilities of Member States.

Fifthly, that expansion must be kept within strict numerical limits because, as is very widely recognized, there is a size beyond which the Council will not be able to function effectively. There appeared to be an emerging consensus in the Working Group that the number of members should not exceed 25.

Sixthly, Australia would regard conferring the veto power on any new permanent member of the Council as inconsistent with its diminishing use in a more cooperative atmosphere of collective security decision-making. For these same reasons, we believe it would be appropriate to slightly dilute the veto power of the existing five permanent members by requiring two from their number to concur in its exercise.

Senator Evans offered specific illustrative models in order to help focus the discussion of the General Assembly and the future work of the Working Group on the questions of composition and size and their relationship to equitable geographical representation. Our action expressed our belief that it is possible to move beyond the abstract into discussion and negotiations on concrete proposals and we encourage others to do the same.

The models we submitted for consideration are set out in an attachment to our written statement that has been circulated to Members of the Assembly.

The model that would most simply meet the legitimate aspirations of the largest States excluded at present from permanent membership of the Security Council - including Japan and Germany, whose claims we support - would involve the creation of five new permanent membership seats. Assuming the continuation of the existing regional groups, three new permanent members would come from Africa and Asia, one from the Group of Western European and Other States, and one from Latin America and the Caribbean.

If, as seems possible, agreement on a simple model of this kind proves to be not easily reachable, it may be worth giving consideration to a more complex alternative model. We have in mind one which would no doubt, in practice, guarantee effective permanency for the largest States excluded at present from the council, including Japan and Germany. But it would at the same time give a greater degree of flexibility to the Council's structure, and greater opportunities for recognition of several other countries that have made a major contribution to the Organization. We would envisage the removal of the prohibition on successive terms for non-permanent members. It might, for those reasons, be a model capable of commanding widespread support. This alternative model would involve, in addition to the five existing permanent members, whose veto power would again be slightly diluted, as already outlined, the creation of eight quasi-permanent seats, allocated among regional groups, for which consecutive election would be possible, together with 10 rotating non-permanent seats. It would make abundant sense, in our view, for the existing regional groups to be at the same time modified to reflect post-cold-war realities. A suggested way in which these 23 seats might be distributed among such a new set of regional groups is also set out in the table attached to the circulated text of this statement.

That table also sets out how they might be distributed among the existing groups. On this model, the question of which States became quasi-permanent members, and how long they remained on the Council in that capacity, would be a matter for determination by the regional group in question.

These models give due consideration to the benefits of retaining an appropriate balance in the proportion of permanent to quasi-permanent or non-permanent members. While the Council's effectiveness is well served by having a core of members with lengthy experience, these models also rest on the healthy rotation of membership of countries, large and small, which would bring the full range of perspectives on international affairs to the work of the Council.Any changes such as those described in these models would require amendments to Articles 23, 27 and 108 of the Charter. The opportunity should be taken at the same time to remove the anachronistic "enemy States" clauses in Articles 53 and 107. An accompanying General Assembly resolution could elaborate any new regional-group arrangements and any other understandings reached on a new Council.

We do not suggest that the models we have advanced are the only possible approaches. They are printed on paper, not etched in stone. These or any such models lend themselves to various possible permutations and combinations. It is only by thinking about such concrete possibilities that we will be able to distinguish between the plausible and the fanciful. We have heard from many speakers the expressed determination to move in a spirit of good will and conscientiousness to see that the United Nations for the next 50 years is soundly built. An expanded, newly legitimized Security Council is a crucial foundation to that building.

Turning now briefly to how the work of the Working Group can best progress, we believe the Working Group should accelerate its deliberations with the aim of agreeing on the basis for expansion by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Our deliberations will benefit from the convening of informal consultations to be held parallel with the Working Group in order to develop formulas for the expansion of the Council and to assist in developing a convergence of approach on such formulas. These processes should commence as soon as possible.

The United Nations time has come. It can become the Organization envisaged in its Charter. Agreement on a new Security Council would be a very important signal that the United Nations is fulfilling its promise. It is a

signal that would be recognized by Member States and by people around the world.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mankind wishes to live in peace in the world, free from any domination or subjugation. However, domination and subjugation on the globe still remain unchecked, and that is largely related to the existing inequitable international order and relationships.

I note with satisfaction that efforts are being made to restructure the Security Council as part of measures aimed at correcting such inequality in international relationships. My delegation appreciates the progress made by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council formed pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993.

The restructuring of the Security Council is an important undertaking in light of the demands of the developing countries, which make up a majority of the United Nations membership, and the principle of justness and democracy.

In this regard my delegation believes that the proposals of the developing countries and the position mentioned in the Final Document of the Foreign Ministers' meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Cairo last June, are of great significance and due consideration should be given to them.

Let me make a few points with regard to the reform of the Security Council. Almost half a century has elapsed since the creation of the United Nations. During this period the United Nations membership has increased to 184 and noticeable changes in international relations have taken place. However, the developing countries are still not equally represented in the Security Council and are excluded from decision-making. Therefore democracy is not fully guaranteed in the Security Council. Even worse, big countries often have a monopoly on its use. We therefore support proposals to enlarge the membership of the Security Council that are aimed at allocating more seats to the developing countries.

Some countries are of the opinion that criteria for permanent membership of the Security Council must be based on considerations such as the level of development of countries and their capability of financially contributing to the United Nations. These views, I believe, are designed to enlarge the membership of the Security Council by only big and developed countries and to prevent developing countries from joining it. Restructuring the Security Council in this way will only contribute to an expansion of the existing imbalance.

Thus, a proportionate number of permanent-member seats in the Security Council should be given to developing countries so that their views and interests can be represented in the Security Council. In particular, due consideration should be given to the allocation of seats to countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America on the principle of equitable regional representation.

In addition, the number of non-permanent seats in the Security Council needs to be increased to give opportunities to other developing countries to participate in the work of the Security Council. That would strengthen the Security Council by making it responsive and relevant to prevailing realities, and credible and effective.

The General Assembly must play an important role in maintaining international peace and security. In this regard, steps should be taken to make the Security Council accountable to the General Assembly for the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation is of the view that the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly should be readjusted in such a manner that the decisions of the Security Council regarding military intervention and economic sanctions should be endorsed by a two-thirds majority or by consensus in the General Assembly.

As for the Japanese position regarding permanent membership of the Security Council and deletion of "enemy State" clauses in the United Nations Charter, my delegation wishes to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the following point.

As is well known, Japan is a defeated State of the Second World War and it brought much suffering and caused much damage to Asian people and the world's people as a whole. Japan is now pursuing a plan to become a military and nuclear Power while trying to cheat the world by paying only lip-service to apology and compensation for its past aggression and war crimes.

The people of Asia and of the world express serious concern over Japanese behaviour, and they are not in a position to support Japan in its attempt to get a permanent seat on the Security Council unless Japan is willing to

make a clean slate of the crimes it committed during the Second World War.

For these reasons, in my view, it is premature to talk about the possibility of permanent membership for Japan on the Security Council and the deletion of the "enemy State" clauses in the United Nations Charter.

In conclusion, I hope that the joint efforts and endeavours of many delegations will bring about realistic results in the discussion of this item at this meeting.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) *(interpretation from Russian):* The delegation of Belarus regards our current discussion on the question of equitable representation in the Security Council and the increase in its membership as a substantive stage on the way to resolving specific aspects of the problem. We believe that arriving at a consensus on the basis of an achieved understanding on the need to expand the membership of the Security Council should be focused to a greater degree on elaborating practical agreements for carrying out reform of the membership and configuration as well as the functioning of the Council. The organizational framework of this work could be provided by the unofficial consultations and official meetings of the Open-ended Working Group under the guidance of the President of the last session of the Assembly and his two deputies, the distinguished representatives of Finland and Singapore.

Figuratively speaking, we should say that at this stage of the discussion we have to synchronize our watches in order to coordinate our efforts to find ways and means of improving the Security Council's activities under changed circumstances. We believe that success in the negotiations on reforming the Security Council and setting the timetable and the ways and means of carrying this out will largely depend on three factors: the political willingness of States Members of the Organization, abundant clarity in their positions and a willingness to strike a balance of interests on the part of all interested parties.

In this context I would like to recall the essence of what the position of Belarus has been, as revealed in the general political discussion. First, if the United Nations is to continue to work effectively, there must be far-reaching reform of its main bodies, including the Security Council. Secondly, the representation of countries and regions in the Security Council should take more fully into account the interests of all groups of countries, including the Eastern European Group. Thirdly, any reform of the Security Council should not detract from its role as the body that bears the main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, which is something that we all need, particularly small States Members of the United Nations. Fourthly, the Government of the Republic of Belarus regards favourably the proposal to increase the number of permanent members of the Security Council by including States which are making an exceptional contribution to achieving the purposes of the Charter.

In this context, our delegation believes that countries that have declared their intention to assume additional responsibility in the future for maintaining international peace and serving other purposes enunciated in the United Nations Charter and which are requesting permanent membership or so-called extended representation in the Security Council, could even now assume a greater share of the financial burden of expenses for peace-keeping operations. This would help to achieve a more rapid consensus on the criteria for selecting new permanent members of the Security Council. However, any increase in the number of permanent seats should not reduce the possibility of the election and participation in the work of the Security Council of other States, from all regional groups, as non-permanent members. I would particularly like to single out certain other important aspects of the future work on the renewal and reform of the Security Council that may possibly be of interest to States that are not actually seeking permanent membership in the Security Council.

First, as long as, in the General Assembly, there are five regional groups, Belarus cannot accept the concept of reforming the Security Council on the basis of a bipolar view of the world along North-South lines or among the four regional continental groups. We favour looking for reforms of the Security Council that would be based essentially on the concept of a multipolar world, would take into account the increased membership of our Organization, and would provide an opportunity for the equitable and genuine participation of small countries in the activities of the Security Council as non-permanent members.

Secondly, we believe that the total representation of countries from all regions in the Security Council could and should be more democratic in nature. Achieving this is possible only if we are completely clear about the future membership of the five regional groups in the General Assembly. It is absolutely necessary that we take into account the most recent changes in various parts of the world, the possible intention on the part of certain countries to seek membership in other regional groups

and a more equitable distribution of regional quotas for the election of non-permanent members if we are to ensure the representation of countries from each region and a more equitable rotation among countries within regional groups.

Thirdly, any formula for altering the membership and configuration of the Security Council must not fail to take into account the legitimate national and general interests of States Members of each of the five regional groups. Naturally, this is equally true of the Group of Eastern European States, whose number, as you know, has considerably increased over recent years as a result of the formation of new independent States. In this connection, it is rather anomalous to consider a number of proposals that do not always reveal the prospect of an additional rotational seat for the Eastern European Group of States, which, as I said, has in fact accounted for a considerable increase in the total membership of our Organization. Therefore, success in the next stage of negotiating on the upper and lower levels of the additional seats for the members of the Security Council has to be connected to necessarily having at least one extra place for each of the regional groups among the non-permanent members and also intraregional agreements on how they shall be filled.

Fourthly, achieving consensus on many of the specific problems related to the reform of the Security Council is being held up by difficulties in resolving the procedures and the current practices of having a prior selection of candidates within certain existing regional groups of the General Assembly. Therefore, our delegation supports the idea of interregional agreements on the basis of rotation, putting forward candidacies for the rotational seats in the Security Council regardless of the existing or future constitution of its permanent membership and of their distribution among regions or continents.

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus is prepared to cooperate with any interested States to develop further these ideas, on the basis of the following premise: any increase in the permanent membership of the Security Council should not lead to a reduction in the ratio of the permanent and rotational seats in a more representative Security Council. The current and possibly future overrepresentation of the group of Western European and other States and the underrepresentation of three regional groups whose legitimate interests are collectively expressed and defended by the Non-Aligned Movement cannot serve as the grounds for doing a disservice to the interest of those countries that make up the Eastern European Group. The principle of equitable geographical distribution and other principles for selecting non-permanent members of the Security Council as set forth in Article 23, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Charter of the United Nations, should be faithfully and fully applied in achieving both equitable intraregional agreements for filling the two-year and additional rotational seats and interregional agreements on new balanced quotas among the non-permanent seats for each of the five regional groups.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Republic of Belarus is convinced that reforming the Security Council must necessarily involve the democratization of its procedures. Any reforms of this body that are carried out should in no way reduce the level of effectiveness already reached in its work as the United Nations body that bears primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security on behalf of and in the interest of, all States Members of our Organization.

Mr. Muthaura (Kenya): The agenda item before us, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters," is an issue of great interest to the general membership of the Organization. Strong arguments were advanced at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly and deeper elaborations of those arguments have been amply discussed in the Assembly's Open-Ended Working Group, whose summary report has been submitted to us. It is not a question of whether there is justification for reforming the Council but of how best to do so in order to enhance its legitimacy, effectiveness and accountability.

In this regard I wish to associate my delegation with the views that were ably expressed by Tunisia on behalf of the Organization of African Unity and by Indonesia on behalf of the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We, however, wish to highlight a few points.

As envisaged in the Charter the Security Council bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security on behalf of the United Nations. Such a responsibility bestows upon the Council's members, both individually and collectively, the heavy duty of the effective management of international conflicts and situations that threaten international peace and security, to be carried out on behalf of the entire membership of the Organization. Needless to say, this obligation should be impartially applicable, whether the threat is targeted against small States or big States. Smaller countries feel even more threatened by insecurity than do bigger ones, which have the ability to deter threats directed against them. It is

also important for the Assembly to appreciate that threats to international peace and security have important geographical dimensions that cannot be ignored as we deliberate Security Council reform.

Ironically, in its present form and working methods the Security Council tends to deal with conflicts occurring in certain countries and that have serious implications for neighbouring countries without the countries most concerned being given the opportunity to participate in the discussions within the Security Council that are aimed at solving or containing such conflicts. In this connection it is our view that interested countries, and particularly the countries that are neighbours of the country or region at the centre of conflict, should be given ample opportunity, in the Council's informal and formal discussions, to assist the Council to take appropriate measures. Almost invariably, neighbouring countries bear the heaviest burden of the repercussions of conflicts, either in terms of refugees and the overflow of insecurity or in terms of the enforcement measures taken by the Council, such as sanctions.

This brings me to the issue of equitable regional representation in the Security Council. I have already stressed the importance of the geographical dimension with regard to threats to international peace and security. Accordingly, it is in the interests of the Council that all regions be equitably represented by both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council. An effective regional representation will ensure that the Council is adequately sensitized with regard to the regional perceptions and complexities of the conflict in question. A better-informed Council would naturally make more objective and popular decisions on behalf of the general membership of the Organization. Not only should the Council's decision-making be objective, it should be seen to be objective, and in the interest of the general membership. That consideration is more evident at the present time, when the Council is being over-stretched by the growing number of conflicts in which the United Nations is involved throughout the world.

With regard to the size of the Council, we appreciate the rationale behind the present number of permanent seats. None the less, the notion of perpetual permanent seats on the Security Council does not appear to be consistent with the evolution of world power relationships. This is one of the reasons why a proposal has been made to expand the number of permanent seats to include a few other world Powers that have emerged since the Organization was founded. It would be of great significance if the notion of permanency were qualified in the reformed Security Council to make possible a review of the membership of permanent seats after a decade or two.

The non-represented regions of Africa and Latin America and the under-represented region of Asia should be accorded their due share of permanent seats.

The criteria for the selection of permanent members of the Security Council set forth in Article 23 of the Charter need to be interpreted more liberally to include the principle of regional representation. In this regard, seats allocated for regional representation should be filled by election by the General Assembly on the basis of regional nominations. This process would ensure the maintenance of the important principle that Security Council members act on behalf of the general membership.

The non-permanent seats on the Security Council, which currently stand at 10, are too few for the remaining 179 Member States of the United Nations. It is imperative, therefore, that the number be correspondingly increased, taking into account the Charter requirement for equitable geographical distribution.

Many delegations have expressed the view that a Security Council of 25 members would, at present, be a realistic option. We subscribe to that view, taking into account the arguments that have been presented on the need to ensure legitimacy, equitable regional representation and proportionate representation of the general membership. Among those 25 seats it is possible to negotiate the distribution of both permanent and non-permanent seats to correct the imbalance created by history, particularly with regard to the distribution of the permanent seats on the Security Council.

During the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group there was general agreement that transparency in the working methods of the Security Council and the involvement of countries contributing troops to peace-keeping activities, as well as other, closely associated countries, in the Council's informal consultations would enhance that body's effectiveness. We appreciate the measures recently taken by the Security Council towards that end and hope that much more will be done to redress the various weaknesses that have been highlighted during the deliberations of the Working Group and the debate in the General Assembly.

We need not elaborate on the need to democratize the decision-making process in the Council, including the need to do away with the power of the veto, the most undemocratic decision-making method inscribed - unfortunately - in the Charter.

We endorse the proposal by the Open-ended Working Group on the renewal of its mandate to enable it to complete its task. It is our hope that the Working Group will utilize the unique opportunity available on the eve of the Organization's fiftieth anniversary to facilitate consensus on this vital issue of Security Council reform.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana, President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, who so ably steered the Open-ended Working Group. We also wish to commend his two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Chew Tai Soo of Singapore for their intellectual and diplomatic skills and for dedicating many long hours to ensuring that the Working Group made progress.

Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe): A few days ago the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe, Mr. Nathan Shamuyarira, conveyed to Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire the felicitations of our delegation on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this, its forty-ninth session. I echo those sentiments and pledge my delegation's full support and cooperation towards the successful discharge of his mandate.

I should like also to congratulate Ambassador Insanally of Guyana on his sterling conduct of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session and, in particular, on his chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on the issue before us. Our commendation is due also to the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Chew Tai Soo of Singapore and Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland. We thus welcome the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation On and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) has issued an African common position, and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has issued declarations and communiqués stating its position on the issues currently before us. Zimbabwe fully supports and subscribes to these collective positions on the restructuring and reorganization of the Security Council.

As we all know, the Security Council is mandated, under the Charter, with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In an increasingly turbulent world the Council is being called upon to act under increasingly delicate and complex circumstances. Hence, if it is to have greater efficiency and effectiveness it needs to wield greater legitimacy, moral authority and credibility. This is possible only in circumstances of greater transparency and accountability on the part of the Council. In the absence of democracy and equitable representativeness, there can be no transparency or accountability.

Thus any Security Council reform must begin on the premise that the democratic ethic that is now a cause for celebration within our national borders should find expression at the international level too. In this respect, the notion of absolute permanent membership of the Security Council and the attendant veto should now be regarded as relics of a bygone era and should therefore be abolished. Is it not the greatest irony of our times that those who assiduously resist the democratization of relations between nations are the most vocal in insisting on democratic governance within nations?

From the work done so far, it would appear that attainment of the goal of abolishing absolute permanent membership and the veto may be long in coming. Therefore, any transitional arrangements arrived at must seriously address the imbalances and injustices of existing arrangements.

It is quite clear that the geographical distribution of both permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council is grossly inequitable. This has to be rectified if the decisions of the Council are to get the stamp of legitimacy that the nature of its mandate requires. However, we believe that, in the interim period, the mandates of any additional members of the Security Council should be subject to periodic review. Nevertheless, for their periods on the Council they should enjoy the same rights and privileges, including the veto, as the existing permanent members. The ultimate goal should continue to be that all members of the Security Council are subject to election. The principle of the consent of the governed is paramount.

We believe that while the institution of the veto lasts, its use should be circumscribed so as to prevent its

unilateral use to promote or protect narrow national interests.

We take note of the limited reforms introduced by the Security Council in recent months. Several representatives have already alluded to these, and we shall not labour the point. However, my delegation believes that these cosmetic reforms should not be seen as substitutes for the more fundamental change that we seek. Towards the conclusion of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly some members suggested in the Working Group that perhaps we needed to formalize the limited changes in working methods that the Security Council has been pressured into introducing. We fear that formalization of otherwise superficial changes could only foster a false sense of accomplishment. Our approach should be that of a comprehensive package - a package that will ensure the creation of a transparent, representative and democratic Security Council.

Mr. Biegman (Netherlands): As the hour is late I shall be brief.

My delegation welcomed the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the question before us, and I wish to thank its Chairman, Ambassador Insanally and the Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Breitenstein and Chew, for their tireless efforts and laudable contributions in this regard.

The Group's report was extremely short because, despite a convergence of views on many matters, consensus was still far away. Nevertheless, on one point all States Members are agreed: that the Security Council should be enlarged to some extent. This common conviction is in itself an important step forward.

We hope that during this session of the General Assembly the Open-ended Working Group will be able to narrow the differences that still exist and enhance the convergence so that it can come forward with more concrete proposals.

In his speech to the General Assembly the Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs outlined a number of priorities and principles which, in the view of my Government, should be respected in the process of reforming the Security Council. Let me briefly repeat the seven most important points for the record.

First, both the composition and the working methods of the Council will have to be changed in order to increase the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations in general.

Second, as changes in the composition of the Council will require amendments to the Charter, it is logical and desirable that reform of the Council should have the broadest possible support among Member States.

Third, a careful balance must be struck between the effectiveness of the Council and the necessity to enhance its representative character. We hope that consensus can be reached on a total number of seats somewhere in the low twenties.

The President returned to the Chair.

Fourth, the United Nations Charter indicates in Article 23, appropriately, that eligibility for membership in the Council will depend in the first instance on

> "the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution."

Fifth, these consequently, should be the criteria for new membership. Without excluding other new members, my country is therefore in favour of the admission of Germany and Japan as permanent members of the Security Council.

Sixth, the Netherlands would, in the context of an enlargement, have no objection in principle to an amendment of paragraph 2 of Article 23 to create the possibility of re-election of Member States in non-permanent seats in the Council.

Seventh, enhanced transparency and closer coordination between the Security Council and the United Nations membership at large is of extreme importance. I wish to stress in this regard the urgent need for an improved flow of information to and consultation with countries participating in peace-keeping operations. We are prepared to participate actively in efforts to establish workable mechanisms in this regard. Such improvements need not wait until the enlargement of the Security Council takes place.

My delegation is looking forward to the continuation of the exchange of views in the Open-ended Working Group during this session of the General Assembly.

Concrete proposals for reforming the Security Council will be evaluated in the light of the foregoing key elements.

The Assembly can count on my delegation's cooperation in finding lasting, equitable and fair solutions that will help the Security Council carry out its important and challenging mandate in an ever- more-complex global context. In the consideration of this agenda item, my country will be guided by a desire to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, credibility and legitimacy of the Security Council in the interest of all United Nations Member States.

Mr. Abiola (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation welcomes the opportunity to participate in this debate on the important question of equitable representation on and increase in membership of the Security Council. Nigeria has always considered that the changes which have occurred on the international scene since the inception of our Organization, and which have crystallized especially since the end of the cold war, seriously warrant a modification in the composition and working methods of the Security Council so that it will be better able to respond effectively to changed and changing circumstances. The United Nations, for which Member States have great expectations and aspirations, would be failing in its duties and out of line with reality if it were unable to take cognizance of the mood of its membership relative to the necessity for democratization and the transparency of its working methods and of the need for this entire membership to be better represented, particularly in the Security Council, the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In accordance with the preamble of the Charter, which adverts to "We the peoples of the United Nations", the Security Council must truly act and be seen to act on behalf of the peoples of the United Nations.

This is a compelling reason why the restructuring of the Council must remain of primary interest and concern.

In the course of the past year particularly, renewed efforts have been made to address the various considerations which should have an impact on the eventual determination of the form, character and extent of the review process. In this regard, Member States provided viewpoints which enabled the Open-ended Working Group, established by the General Assembly at the forty-eighth session, to begin to address substantively the issues relating to the restructuring of the Council. The outcome of the efforts exerted thus far reveals the complexity and challenges of the review process. It also testifies to the active interest of all Member States on the subject.

In this endeavour, my delegation would like to pay a special tribute to Mr. Samuel Insanally of Guyana, who, in his capacity as President of the General Assembly at the forty-eighth session, chaired the proceedings of the Open-ended Working Group with distinction and effectiveness. He was ably assisted by the Ambassadors of Finland and Singapore.

As a delegation we continue to believe that the restructuring of the Security Council must be undertaken in a holistic rather than a piecemeal manner, since a review must take into account the subjects of permanent and non-permanent membership; the methods of work, including the question of the transparency of the Security Council; and equitable geographical distribution of seats.

In considering the question of representation and an increase in the membership of the Council, one cannot but reiterate the singular absence of African representation in the permanent membership of the Council, despite the continent's 53 Member States. As to the specific question of number, my delegation is flexible but believes that, whatever final figure is reached, it must be consistent with the principle of representativeness and equitable geographical distribution. My delegation does not believe that we should create a status subordinate to that of permanent member, nor do we support the idea of rotating permanent seats. In other words, we recognize and advocate the continuance of the present arrangement of permanent and non-permanent membership only.

All permanent members should enjoy the same status and privileges and assume the responsibilities incumbent on membership. It is our opinion that the criteria for permanent membership on the Council should include such considerations as a country's population, its capacity to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, and its track record, assessed over a period of time, in international peace-keeping and peace-making efforts.

Enough concern has been expressed about the modalities for bringing these changes into effect, including that of amending the relevant provisions of the Charter. My delegation believes that consideration of these modalities should not be used as obstacles to proceeding with the review. Since it has been possible to amend the Charter on previous occasions, we believe that

a subsequent review can adopt a similar procedure. In any case, there is a ground swell of support by the international community for an increase in the membership of the Security Council. All that is required therefore is the political will and commitment on the part of Member States to translate this support into concrete reforms.

It is the hope of my delegation that at the current session an appropriate resolution will be adopted, enabling the Open-ended Working Group to continue its consideration of the question with a view to reaching an early conclusion. We urge Member States to show flexibility in the interest of international peace and security and of equity and justice.

The President *(interpretation from French):* We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Members will recall that by resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993 the General Assembly decided

> "to establish an Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council, and other matters related to the Security Council" *(para. 1)*.

Having been formally established by the General Assembly, the Working Group is a subsidiary organ of the Assembly.

Furthermore, by decision 48/498 of 14 September 1994, the General Assembly decided that the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council should continue its work, taking into account, *inter alia*, the views expressed at the forty-ninth session, and submit a report to the General Assembly before the end of that session.

By the end of this meeting the Assembly will have heard the views expressed by many Member States. It is my understanding that the Assembly wishes to confirm that the Working Group should continue to consider all aspects of the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council.

The Working Group is therefore in a position to continue its work in due course, at a date to be established by mutual agreement following consultations.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 33.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.